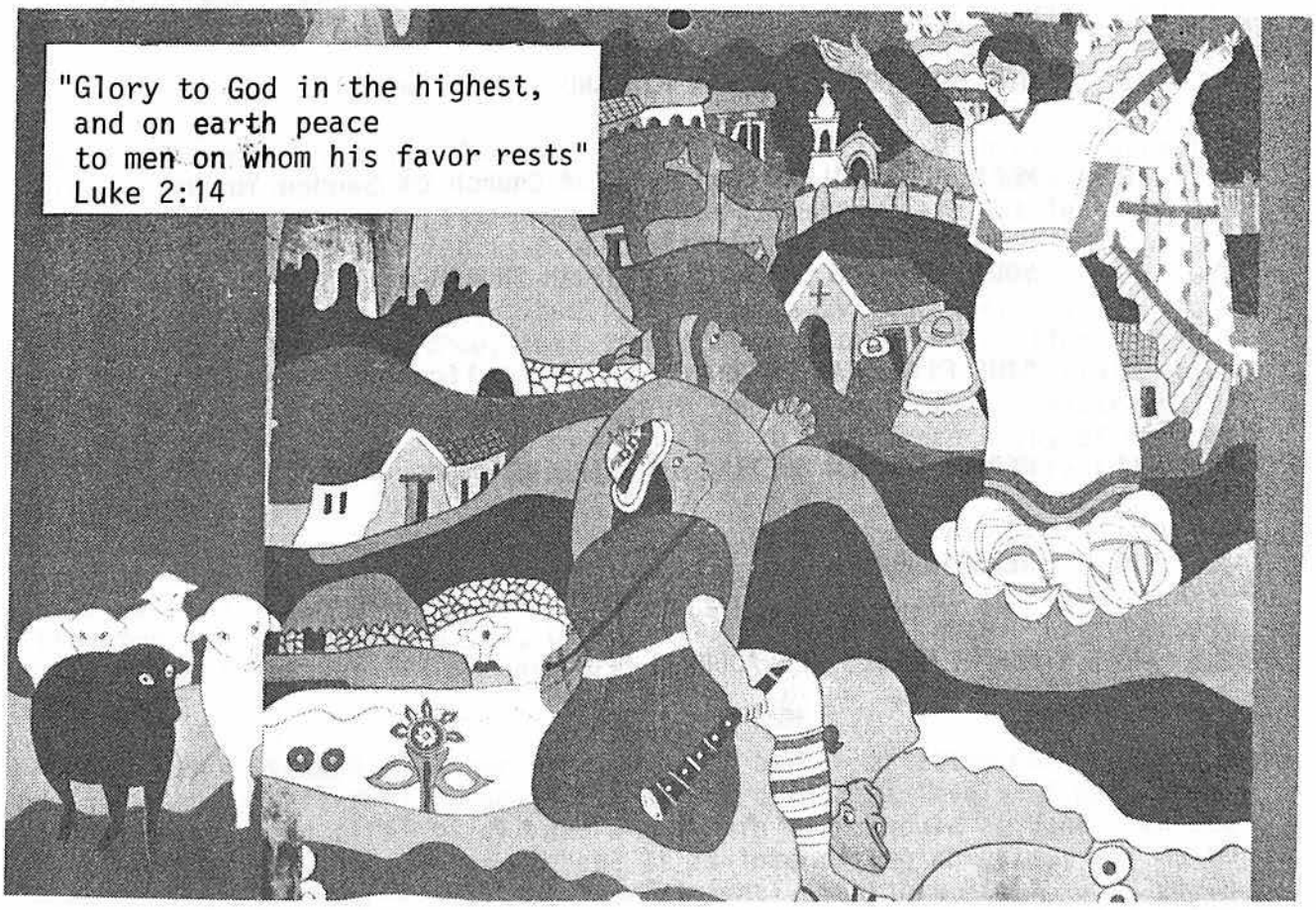
YOUTH NEWSLETTER

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION/YOUTH DESK No 20 November 1986



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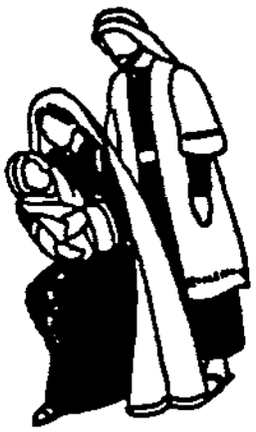
EDITORIAL



For God has revealed his grace for the salvation of all mankind. That grace instructs us to give up ungodly living and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this world, as we wait for the blessed Day we hope for, when the Glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will appear. He gave Himself for us, to rescue us from all wickedness and to make us a pure people who belong to him alone and are eager to do good.
Teach these things...

Titus 2,11-15

Isn't Christmas a beautiful time? Some of us still live in close expectation of it or maybe just under an impression of this most pleasant celebration among the Christian feasts. The younger we are, at least in our faith, the more convincing is probably this truth. I remember my grandmother saying that Christmas was a beloved feast also at times when it was a problem to even get enough food for Christmas Eve and there was no chocolate on the Christmas tree, just some pieces of paper decoration, nuts or apples. Whoever is young enough to enjoy the story of the materialization of God's Grace - coming to this world in the child Jesus from Nazareth, in the family of Mary and Joseph, everyone has to experience a joy of Christmas also when facing very bad circumstances of an everyday life today and sensing fear of the future.

For, imagine, we are not along anymore with our troubles! God wants to help us! He is sending His Son Jesus to be one of us and to lay a foundation for our success. Oh, yes, Christmas is beautiful when this message still creates the main reason for our joy, when it is central for our lives.

But how does it work with our everyday life before or after Christmas? How does it look like with our youth work on different levels of our church organization, and first of all where the main work should be done - in the congregations of your and my church? It is interesting sometimes for me to have some of the (maybe not always sufficient) insights into our youth work in the churches of our federation - see different attempts to develop programs, strategies how to reach out to young people, train leaders, find interesting and updated themes, secure funds for the youth work, convince the churches and congregations that opportunity should be offered to young people to gather separately... And sometimes it even happens that rooms are available, financial resources were budgeted, program outlines developed... and it still does not work as it should. Young people are more attracted by something outside than what we have offered. What is the reason for these ongoing difficulties?

We do ask this question together with all of those who are discontent about the results of their work. We check the preparation of our programs, we check the youth leadership training program, the choice of the themes, we ask: are we not offering too much, shouldn't we require more active participation, more contributions from our young people? Would it not be better to give them opportunity to become active instead of assisting them. Of course, all these questions are necessary, because our youth work should be as well prepared and structured and funded as possible.

But do we also ask the question that Christmas also this year poses to us: do we ask how central this grace revealed in Jesus Christ is for us who are responsible for preparing the program for young people, who are youth leaders, or who would just like to contribute to the growth of a concrete youth group for the benefit of a concrete congregation? It was a grace that was revealed for the salvation of all mankind, the Bible says to us.

This Jesus Christ and the grace revealed through His whole life came to instruct us, give us a leadership in order to be shown through us as a hope for the salvation for all mankind. He comes to make us pure people and eager to do good. This is the central, though very simple truth we can hear from the Bible. This is a base for all salvation, all success in any attempt to be useful for all the needy around us. Only with Him, can our discussion on any concrete issue of the long agenda of problems of this world be useful. We need His revealed grace to our discussions and work on evangelization programs but also on discussions and work for a just economy, human rights, just participatory structures of our churches and the world. We need Him for ourselves and for our engagement and only in Him we have the hope to win our struggle. That is why Jesus Christ should always be with us and we should confess Him as our Lord and Brother wherever we do our work.

I wish this to all of us sharing this joyful faith of Christmas,

Yours,

Julius

NOTES FROM OUR DESK ....

We would like to communicate to you a few observations from the international activities we were involved in since the last issue of our Youth Newsletter.

Youth Meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe from July 1-5, 1986 was attended by delegates from 25 different countries, mainly from South Africa and Namibia, USA and Europe. There were also a few delegates from other parts of Africa, from Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America and the Lutheran World Federation was also represented by Ellen Martha Blaasvaer from Norway, who was at that time a youth intern in the LWF in Geneva. We bring a comprehensive report on this event in this issue.

The LWF Executive Committee meeting was held in Munich, FRG, on July 3-9. For the international youth program of the LWF it was an important meeting, as we were for the first time in the existence of our Desk invited to submit our program to the members of the EC. It happened in the framework of the report of the Commission of Church Cooperation, where the LWF Youth Coordinator was allowed to highlight, through concrete examples of the youth Desk, different program areas of the work of the Department of Church Cooperation. The discussion that followed showed a lively interest in and a support for the youth program. Both youth representatives in the EC, Kim Schuster (USA) and Annie Marava (Zimbabwe) could bring substantial contributions to the issues discussed. The promising support that the youth program received gives an even greater responsibility for us to fulfil our task.

The Assembly of the "Church of Sweden Youth" was held in Ystad (Sweden) on August 4-8. About 1500 participants were approaching the main theme from different angles: "Courage" (to exist, to struggle, to grow). Prior to the meeting a seminar on International concerns of the Swedish Lutheran Youth organizations and their cooperation with LWF was organized. The 17 participants of the seminar were members of the international committee of the two Swedish Lutheran youth organizations (Church of Sweden Youth and the Ansgar-Union) and also included guests from the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia. The two-day seminar brought a learning experience for all participants, new enthusiasm to further development of an advisory committee for the Youth Desk, through which member churches could participate in the preparation of the youth program in a better way.

The Mission Youth Event in Turku, Finland on August 8-12 was attended by about 1500 participants from the Finnish Lutheran Church and some guests. We bring a comprehensive report on this event in Finland in this issue. The most interesting part from my point of view was a seminar on the theme: **"Youth in Mission"**. The discussion on the possibilities to be involved in the mission work of the church first showed a widespread understanding of mission - to be a task for chosen people who, with the support of other members of the church, will be sent to other countries. A quest of an active participation of every believing Christian in the mission outreach of the church, brought us many findings indicating what we can do

in our own surroundings for the mission of our church in our own nation. Young people confessed that e.g:

- mission groups in the congregations usually consist of elderly members - youth should find ways to participate in these groups and the groups should be open to newcomers;

- we should be more confessing Christians at schools and work and our faith should not only be used for ourselves, we should open up and speak about what faith means to us;

- we should pray more together for mission outreach of the church and for the personal awareness of the importance of mission of young and older members of the church;

- support mission abroad, be prepared to go and serve as a missionary;

- to maintain contacts to people in other countries and thereby to overcome an isolation of the congregations and the church;

- to be a good Christian in one's own surroundings.

We feel that for many of these tasks we do not have enough courage. We are not used to live like this, our faith is more introvert, our nature more shy, some of the participants said. We are not used to visit foreign people in unknown apartments and to offer them, on behalf of the congregations, necessary assistance although participants admitted that many of these people feel lonely and maybe they are waiting for such an unexpected visit.

The personal witness, preceded by a loving experience (help in need) was after all seen as the most impressive way of doing mission although other methods as radio, TV, publications, mass meetings, evangelization campaigns, also have their advantages and should be continued. The very active discussion and a gradually more and more engaged and personal approach to the subject of the seminar was a real joy and award to the organizer (Ritva Hulmi) and let's hope to all the participants.

A preparatory meeting of the Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering took place in Jerusalem upon the invitation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan on September 24-29. As a part of the program of the Youth Desk, this gathering is in preparation in order to be held on June 25 to July 9 in Beit-Jala near Bethlehem at the Talitha Kumi Lutheran School, with the theme: "Lutheran Youth Confessing Christ in Asia" (Subthemes: Challenges of the Lutheran Churches in Asia, Witness to the Gospel, Witness in the social work of the church, Witness in the political engagement). The preparatory meeting evaluated materials and reactions which had come from LWF member churches and their youth workers to the subject and objectives of the conference. Further practical plans were also made and the tasks divided between the ELC in Jordan (through the Youth Committee, led by Rev. Munib Younan) and the Youth Desk in Geneva.

A UN/Washington Seminar for about 60 representatives of the LCA was organized by its division for Parish Services in New York and Washington DC on the theme: "Root causes of hunger and economics". The LWF Youth Coordinator participated in the meeting on October 20-21 as a resource person, re-

porting on the youth program and bringing personal perspectives on the discussed themes based on experiences from the international work of the LWF. Interesting questions on the role of youth in the creation of a more just world, were raised together with questions on the form of the economical relationship between the so called first and third worlds and questions about the necessity of a wider social security system in the USA and more Christian standards in the economical relations of the USA to the developing countries. The whole seminar, being an ongoing program of the LCA, certainly brought much more than just a learning experience for its participants.

The Committee on Youth of the German National Committee met in Göttingen, FRG on November 1-2. This committee was established as a result of the excitement for an international dimension of the Lutheran youth work in the FRG and as a support group in the GNC to our Desk. Also this last meeting helped, through a committed engagement of all the 11 participants, to continue in the thinking process on all current issues as: through WCC Subunit raised idea of a Global Youth Happening (1990); necessity to prepare another Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering, as the next venue of the LWF Assembly seems to be settled upon the invitation of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (1990); youth participation in the work of the LWF structures and a possible deeper involvement of the Lutheran churches in the FRG in the cooperation with other member churches of the federation through the LWF Youth Desk.

Activities in preparation:

- LWF global youth consultation on the "Role of the Youth in the Human and Natural Resources Development" meets in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on November 30 - December 7, 1986. There will be about 60 participants;

- A new youth team visit at this time to the Lutheran churches in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia is being prepared for March 1987. A seven members international team with representatives of all regions of the federation and the Youth Coordinator will meet with groups of young people in the organized meetings and celebrations;

- A Seminar (joint activity of the Department of Studies, Dr. Paul Rajashekar's desk and the Youth Desk) on the spirituality in Western Europe should meet in 1987 in order to highlight some of the new developments in the interest of young people in the mentioned region in new forms of spirituality and answer a question of the implication of these findings to our Lutheran worship life;

- An Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering will meet in Beit Jala, (since the 1967 war part of the State of Israel) on June 25 - July 9, 1987.

Materials to be ordered from the Youth Desk

- The "Future is now" publication of the LWF Youth Desk (with Bible studies by Allan Boesak brought in the PAYG, Budapest, main contributions on Peace and Justice issues from PAYG and the recommendations of the PAYG);

- Last issue of our Youth Newsletter;
- Material from some of the member churches, as offered in the recent issues of the Youth Newsletter, could be asked for from the place of origin (no longer available at our Desk);
- We kindly ask those responsible youth leaders of the churches, who have materials concerning youth work which could also be used by other churches, to send us the titles and a short description of the character of the material and we would be pleasedto report on them in the next issue of the Youth Newsletter.

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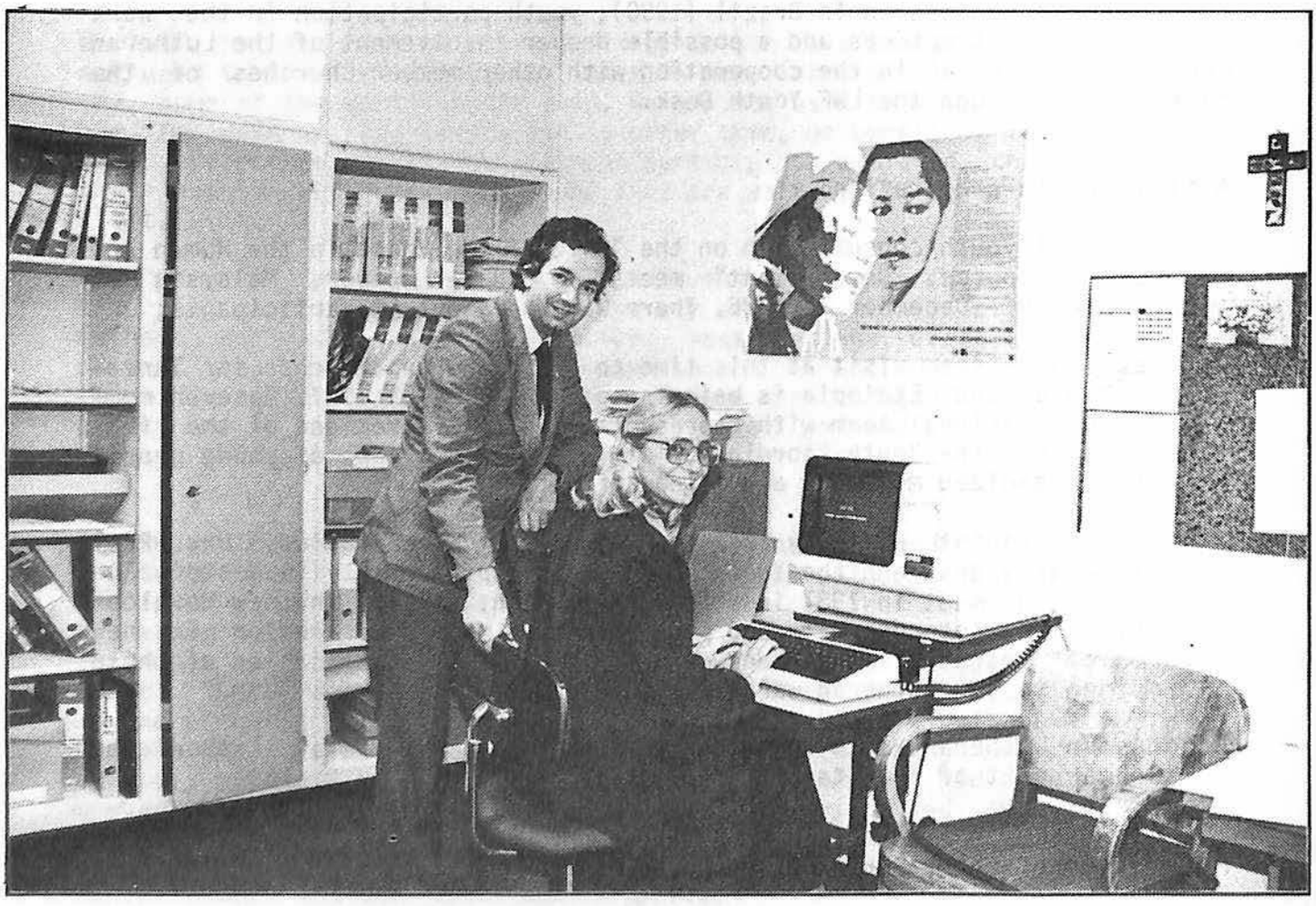
.... AND GREETINGS FROM US



Heinz and Birgitta

YOUTH COMMENTS ON LWF COMMISSIONS

Your representatives in the Commission on Studies and the Commission on World Service - reporting to you

As you probably know, one of the achievements of our last Assembly in Budapest was that we now have at least some representatives of the young people of our churches in our decision making bodies:

Executive Committee:	Ms. Annie Marava (Zimbabwe) Ms. Kim Schuster (USA)
Commission on World Service:	Ms. Susanne Adamczewski (FRG)
Commission on Studies:	Ms. Mercedes Garcia,(Argentina)
Commission on Communication:	Ms. Dalla Thordardottir (Iceland)
Commission on Church Cooperation:	Mr. Albert Tokave (PNG)

Upon a request from our desk to communicate some of the observations on youth related matters in the different meetings to us and to you we have received two interesting reports which we would like to share with you in an almost unchanged form.

The purpose of this is not only to inform you but also to encourage you to approach the above mentioned youth representatives whenever you would want to remind them of something important that they should know about or present to their meetings. The meetings of the commissions and the executive committee take place once a year, the next one will be a joint meeting of all the commissions in Geneva (April 1-10), the EC will meet in July in Denmark.

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MERCEDES GARCIA, Argentina:

In the first place, I should pick up something that causes a big concern: the deficit the Federation is facing in every budget makes the Scholarship program very limited, and that means some young people who could have a good opportunity in researching or furthering their studies are not able to do so because of money restrictions. Of course this is an overall problem which affects the whole of the Federation and against which there are many people fighting.

But it is not only a matter of funds, for many churches have not yet discovered the possibilities and enrichment which can come from mutual sharing of resources, personnel, etc. This could be an interesting point for the youth, though I am sure Monika (former LWF youth intern) has informed the youth desk which are the points the Latin American churches need to speak about and which ones they are not interested in, at least not at the moment. But rather than a question of particular points, it is here a question of who decides which ones they are, what are the problems Latin American youth are facing, etc.

Our meeting took place in Decorah, Iowa, USA in Luther College, and therefore we had some (little) contact with the students there. Two of them were there as youth representatives, but since they were busy with their many activities we could not speak together. Anyhow I had the opportunity of preaching there on Sunday, and then I had some contact with them.

As I see the work in the Department of Studies, there are not many projects directly related to youth, but I would rather speak of groups of interest, for instance, on Ecology (some projects from the Strasbourg Institute on Creation, the question of land, peace and nuclear threatening, etc), on Social issues and/or systems, on ethics, on dogmatics, etc. Some of the concerns are particular for a region or continent, while they do not mean much for others. Since they are particular for that area they are concerns young people from that area will have to face some day, though they may not be interested in it at the moment. Because of that, I do not ask for special issues, but for a place in the common issues we are facing, for younger people, as well as for women. Once you put them apart, in their own group, then there seems they are not part of the whole any more.

This is what I see where I am trying to serve, but on the other hand, the Youth Desk should try to help young people to understand the church as a whole, and bring these concerns the commissions are studying to the youth, since they will have to solve most of them later on.

I hope you do not mind my honesty, I just felt if we are going to have some work together, you should know how I do feel on the matter.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,
Mercedes Garcia
Youth Representative
Commission on Studies

SUSANNE ADAMCZEWSKI, FRG: (Report from World Service Commission Meeting)
(Translation - Erika Seyfried)

Now to your question, whether there is anything interesting to report: It really is not easy for me to answer such a complex question. I spent altogether 4 weeks in Zimbabwe, and I was impressed not only by the session of the World Service Commission.

Questions concerning social injustice shall be given more emphasis on the part of LWF/WS. This decision was taken by the Commission, and it laid down guidelines for the procedures to be followed by the ORSA (Office for Research and Social Action) subgroup. Generally it could be noticed that technocracy was becoming a less important factor within the development work. Quite often the question was raised whether the work of WS does not create a dependence which does not motivate the partner to take own initiatives. But due to a very tight agenda, there was hardly any time for discussion, and at the end of the session, some of the points were rather ticked off. Therefore, I experienced already for the second time that the request for more participation of women (...in leading functions) and a stronger influence of youth in the LWF were just a pro forma point, which should figure on the agenda. We, being the most concerned by this question, should see to it that our churches respond to these requests. During the meeting a certain solidarity and strength could be felt between us women, and this gave me hope. 29 years old, I am actually the youngest member of our Commission - the next age being 45. This really is not representative. However, this time there were a few youth social workers and the youth pastor of ELCZ (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zimbabwe) participating as observers, which made me feel stronger in my position as youth representative.

For me, the time after the session of the Commission continued to be quite exciting. I was given the opportunity to learn about the youth work of the ELCZ, and I had several nice discussions and experiences with young people. At this occasion I was able to notice, that many things that touch youth in Zimbabwe also touch us in the FRG. Also the fact that youth in our country often consider the church as being too bureaucratic, is an international problem. For this reason I am looking forward to the consultation in Malaysia as an encouraging step. The struggle for justice concerns us all, no matter which part of the world we come from. That is why I am anxious to see the effect this consultation may have in our country. I appreciate the form of team work in a continuous composition of the team. Another important aspect is what the recognition of the causes of social injustice means to us, as part of our church. What can we do to this effect in our churches? What are the possibilities? The requirements, as for example the change of the world economy system, rather discourage me. I live in a capitalist country, and my brain tells me that such a system can only exist by exploiting other people and countries. But what does it really mean to me, how does it affect my way of life and my working conditions?

With best regards,
Susanne Adamcewzki

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B I B E L A R B E I T

von Harald Bretschneider, DDR

zu Micha 4 bzw. Jes. 2

Der Traum von Frieden
Frieden - Entwicklung - Partizipation

(Harald Bretschneider ist Landesjugendpfarrer der Evangelischen Kirche in Sachsen und war einer der wichtigsten Vorleser in der LWB Vorvollversammlung in Budapest 1984)

Das Denkmal

In den fünfziger Jahren hat der sowjetische Bildhauer J. Wutschetitsch das D e n k m a l "Schwerter zu Pflugscharen" geschaffen. Dieses Denkmal hat die Sowjetunion der UNO geschenkt. Es steht vor dem UNO-Gebäude in New York und trägt den erstaunlichen Satz: Wir werden die Schwerter zu Pfugscharen umschmieden. Dieser Satz steht zweimal in der Bibel. Einmal bei Jesaja 2,4 und zum anderen bei Micha 4,3. Es ist wie ein kleiner Witz des Himmels, dass die Sowjetunion, die sich dem Atheismus verpflichtet weiss, in ein Land des sogenannten christlichen Abendlandes ein Denkmal mit biblischem Inhalt schenkt.
D e n k m a l n a c h !

Der biblische Text

Micha 4, 1-5 und Jesaja 2, 1-5 wird gelesen.

Erläuterungen zur Siutation

Der diensthabende König war ein gewisser Hiskia. Mit ihm konnte das Land Juda zufrieden sein. Es hatte schon schlechtere Staatschefs gegeben. Die Zeiten waren günstig. Der Lebensstandard war gestiegen.

Auch mit den Priestern war dieser König ins Reine gekommen. Einer Kultreform waren sämtliche ausländischen Götter und Kulte zum Opfer gefallen. Es war fast wie früher in Juda.

Selbst mit den Besatzungstruppen, die Menschen aus dem Nordreich Israel deportiert hatten und das Land mit Reparationskosten belasteten, schien dieser Hiskia klar zu kommen.

In der Regierung liebäugelten einige politisch Verantwortliche mit anderen Bündnispartnern und hofften auf Befreiung von der Besatzungsmacht. Solche Geheimdiplomatie war schon immer gefährlich. Der mächtigste Mann der damaligen Welt Sanherib von Assur erschien mit seinem Heer persönlich vor den

Toren Jerusalems. Die Krise war perfekt. Jerusalem wurde belagert. Das Umland war unterworfen. Nur die Hauptstadt hielt sich noch. Schliesslich hatte Hiskia in die Hauptstadt das meiste investiert.

In solchen Zeiten hat es ein Regierungschef nicht leicht. Er selbst war gereizt. Jeder Berater hatte einen anderen Ratschlag. Die Angst nagte. Die Armee kämpfte erbittert. Den Offizieren ging immer mehr die Puste aus und sie versuchten, den König zu neuer Bündnispolitik zu bewegen.

Die Regierungsbeamten, mitunter Menschen ohne stabiles RUckgrat, wussten sich keinen Rat. Sie schafften ihr Hab und Gut ins Ausland. Die Juristen machten neue Gesetze, um die Verteidigungskraft zu erhöhen. Die Masse der Menschen spürte den Wohlstand schwinden. Vermutlich gab es Rationierungen.

Sanherib mit seinem Heer konnte Jerusalem nicht einnehmen. Er versuchte, die Hauptstadt auszuhungern. In seinen Annalen ist zu lesen: "Ich machte ihn zum Gefangenen in Jerusalem, seiner königlichen Residenz, wie ein Vogel im Käfig."

In dieser Situation treten in Jerusalem zwei Männer auf. Der eine, Jesaja, stammt seiner Herkunft nach aus Regierungskreisen. Der andere hiess Micha, ein einfacher Mann vom Lande. Jesaja hatte grossen politischen Ueberblick. Er warnte vor falscher Bündnispolitik und vor allzu grossem Zutrauen auf politische Kunstgriffe. Er ermahnte, am Glauben an Ja-hwe festzuhalten und dadurch verantwortlich mit der Macht umzugehen.

Micha tadelte die landmakelnden Grossgrundbesitzer, die sich über Schleichwege nicht nur Land für eine Datsche, sondern für ganze feudale Ländereien ergaunert hatten. Er entlarvte die Rechtsverletzer, die sich unrechtmässig am Volkseigentum bereichert und damit nicht nur die Wirtschaft, sondern auch das Menschsein untergraben hatten.

Diese beiden Männer sagten in etwa: Er, der Herr, der Gott Israels, wird richten unter den Völkern; sie werden ihre Schwerter zu Pflugscharen umschmieden und ihre Spiesse zu Sicheln machen. Es wird kein Volk mehr wider das andere das Schwert erheben, und sie werden nicht mehr lernen Krieg zu führen.

Der Traum

Traumhaft diese Vorstellung. Konfliktreich allerdings, wenn wir überlegen, in welcher Situation die Propheten dieses Wort gewagt haben. Wieviele Vorwürfe werden sie erhalten haben. Die einen werden sie als Spinner, als Träumer, die die Realität übersehen, kritisiert haben. Die anderen werden Landesverrat und Wehrkraftzersetzung vorgeworfen haben.

Die Situation war so gefährlich, dass hundert Jahre später noch der Mut des Micha berücksichtigt und die politische Klugheit des Hiskia gewürdigt wurde. (Vgl. dazu Jeremia 26) Der politischen Vernunft und der menschlichen Grösse des Hiskia ist es zu danken, dass er die kritischen Stimmen nicht im Gefängnis zum Schweigen bringen, sondern sich selber zur Busse und Besinnung rufen liess.

Frieden - Entwicklung - Partizipation nur ein Traum? Visionen, Träume und Utopien sind wichtige Voraussetzungen für Entwicklung und Zukunft.

Damals geschah neben der Besinnung des Königs und seines Volkes noch mehr. Die Angriffe der assyrischen Truppen wurden seltener. Der Spott der

belagernden Besatzungsmacht verstummte. Eines Tages wurden die Zelte der Soldaten abgebrochen. Sanherib und sein Heer verliessen Juda. Die pest war in seinem Lager ausgebrochen. Jerusalem war gerettet.

Schwerter und Spiesse gab es weiter, die Waffentechnik wurde immer weiter entwickelt. Seit Anbeginn der Menschheit wurden die besten Kräfte menschlichen Geistes dafür verwendet, dass die wirksamsten Waffen zur Vernichtung des Gegners erfunden werden konnten.

Methodischer Hinweis: Es lohnt, Bilder zu sammeln und aneinanderzureihen, die die Entwicklung der Waffentechnik darstellen.

Faustkeil Steinspeer Kupferlanze	Kriegswagen Pfeil+Bogen Steinschleuder	Kreuz	Rüstung Kanonen Gewehre	Panzer Kampfflug- zeuge	Atombomben biol.+chem. Waffen

Jesus Christus hat diese Art Geschichte zu machen durchkreuzt. Er dokumentiert Gottes politische Konzeption für die Welt. Er experimentiert unter menschlichen Voraussetzungen ein Leben der Liebe, so wie es für diese Welt gedacht und geplant war. Er probiert unter der ruinierenden Eigenliebe der Menschen eine Liebe, die nicht auf Kosten anderer lebt, sondern sich das Leben des anderen etwas kosten lässt. So hat Christus für diesen Traum vom Frieden gelitten und durch sein Leiden die Voraussetzungen geschaffen, dass Frieden möglich wird.

Methodischer Hinweis: Das Kreuz wird in die Mitte des Zeitpfeiles oben eingebaut und der senkrechte Balken des Kreuzes wird nach oben und nach unter durch Bilder verlängert, die Handlungsweisen von Menschen abbilden, die durch seine Liebe geprägt sind. (Z.B. Diakonissen, Krankenschwestern, Feuerwehrleute, Wehrdienstverweigerer usw.) So wird durch Christus die Geschichte der Rüstungstechnik im Wahrsten Sinne des Wortes durchkreuzt. Es entsteht ein Kreuz, wie es auf dem Dia abgebildet ist.

Die Vergegenwärtigung

Wie damals um Hiskia, so wird heute um die Jugend geworben. Wer die Jugend hat, hat die Zukunft. Junge Leute werden auch heute von verschiedenen Seiten verschieden beraten. Manche meinen: Es lohnt sich nicht, die persönliche Zukunft aufs Spiel zu setzen. Andere sagen: Die Expansionspolitik des Imperialismus ist so gefährlich, dass man ihr nur durch militärische Stärke begegnen kann. Wieder andere haben Angst vor der Bedrohung aus dem Osten und meinen deshalb, bewaffnet sein zu müssen. Auch die Kirche spricht viel von Frieden, Entwicklung und Partizipation. Wie geht sie wirklich damit um?

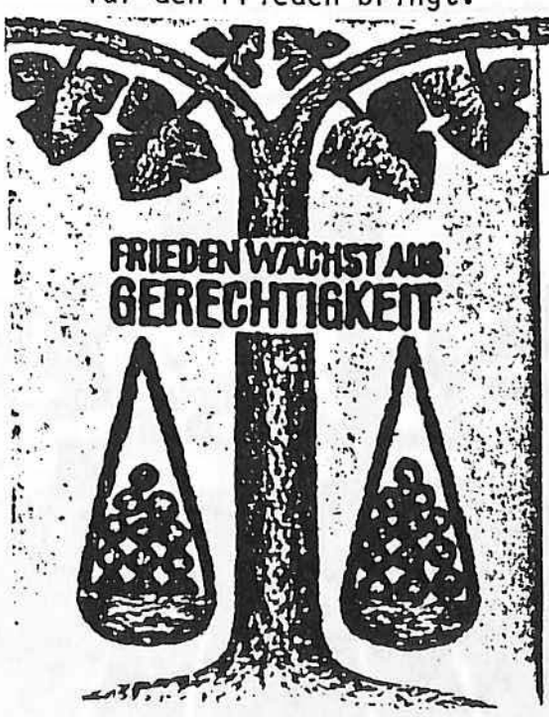
Die Worte der Propheten Micha und Jesaja haben bis in unser Land gewirkt. Junge Menschen haben das Zeichen der Friedensdekade an ihren Jacken und Mänteln überall in unserem Land getragen und damit ihre Sehnsucht nach F r i e d e n ausgedrückt. Viele Diskussionen, intensive Beschäftigung mit dem biblischen Wort und manche leidvolle Erfahrung haben sowohl die Jugendlichen geprägt, als auch in der Kirche zu einer E n t w i c k l u n g geführt. Das eigenständige Friedenszeugnis der Kirchen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik ist nicht ohne Wirkung auf die Politiker geblieben. So haben Jugendliche mitgewirkt, eben p a r t i z i p i e r t.

Das ungeheure Vernichtungspotential, das die Erde zu einem Pulverfass verwandelt hat, die Unsicherheit der Balance des militärischen Gleichgewichtes, die Verknappung der Rohstoffressourcen, die Kosten des Militärischen, die Bindung von physischen und geistigen Kräften lassen fragen, ob die vision von Micha und Jesaja weniger ein Traum von Uneinsichtigen als vielmehr die einzig zukunftsträchtige Wirklichkeit ist, die zum Ueberleben verhilft. Das Ringen um das Kräftegleichgewicht wiegt so schwer, dass es nur noch an einem "seidenen Faden" hängt.

Bei aller Akzeptierung der Verpflichtung eines Staates, für den Schutz seiner Bürger zu sorgen, wächst die Empfindung, dass von Angst und Bedrohung bestimmtes Sicherheitsdenken weniger zum Frieden, als zu Handlungsweisen führt, die auf der Gegenseite wieder Angst erzeugen und zu Gegendrohungen führen.

So werden Gedanken Jesu, vor allem in Bezug auf die Nächsten- und Feindesliebe, die bisher für politisch unvernünftig gehalten wurden, angesichts der tödlichen Bedrohung zu einem Impuls der Befreiung. Das Konzept der Sicherheitspartnerschaft wird zu einem politisch vernünftigen Konzept, denn jeder weiss, dass mehr Waffen nicht mehr Sicherheit bedeuten.

Unter den Jugendlichen, die den friedenstiftenden Gott kennengelernt haben und in die Nachfolge Jesu Christi getreten sind, suchen viele nach Wegen zum Frieden. Sie klagen über das Unrecht und die Ungerechtigkeit in unserer Welt, über die Leiden der Hungernden, über das Schweigen der Hoffnungslosen, über die Aengste der Bespitzelten, über die Schreie der Geschlagenen und über die Ketten der Gefangenen. Sie entdecken die Grenzen der Macht und machen Erfahrungen, welche Chancen persönliche Aufopferung für den Frieden bringt.



Sie versuchen, die Fragen von Frieden und Gerechtigkeit gemeinsam zu bedenken, denn ohne Gerechtigkeit gibt es keinen Frieden und ohne Frieden gibt es keine Gerechtigkeit. Sie versuchen, dem Missbrauch von Macht durch ungerechte Strukturen zu wiederstehen und sich für einen verantwortlichen Umgang mit Macht einzusetzen.

Ihre Freiheit und Offenheit, die es wagt, Unrecht und Machtmissbrauch beim Namen zu nennen, und ihr Mut zu persönlichem Verantvortungsbewusstsein und ihre Bereitschaft zum gesellschaftlichen Engagement wurzeln in dem Glauben an Jesus Christus, der gesagt hat: "Ich bin der Weinstock und ihr seid die Reben". In ihm wurzelt die Gewissheit, dass alle Arbeit für den Frieden nicht umsonst ist, sondern Frieden aus Gerechtigkeit wächst.

YOUTH MEETING IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE, JULY 1986

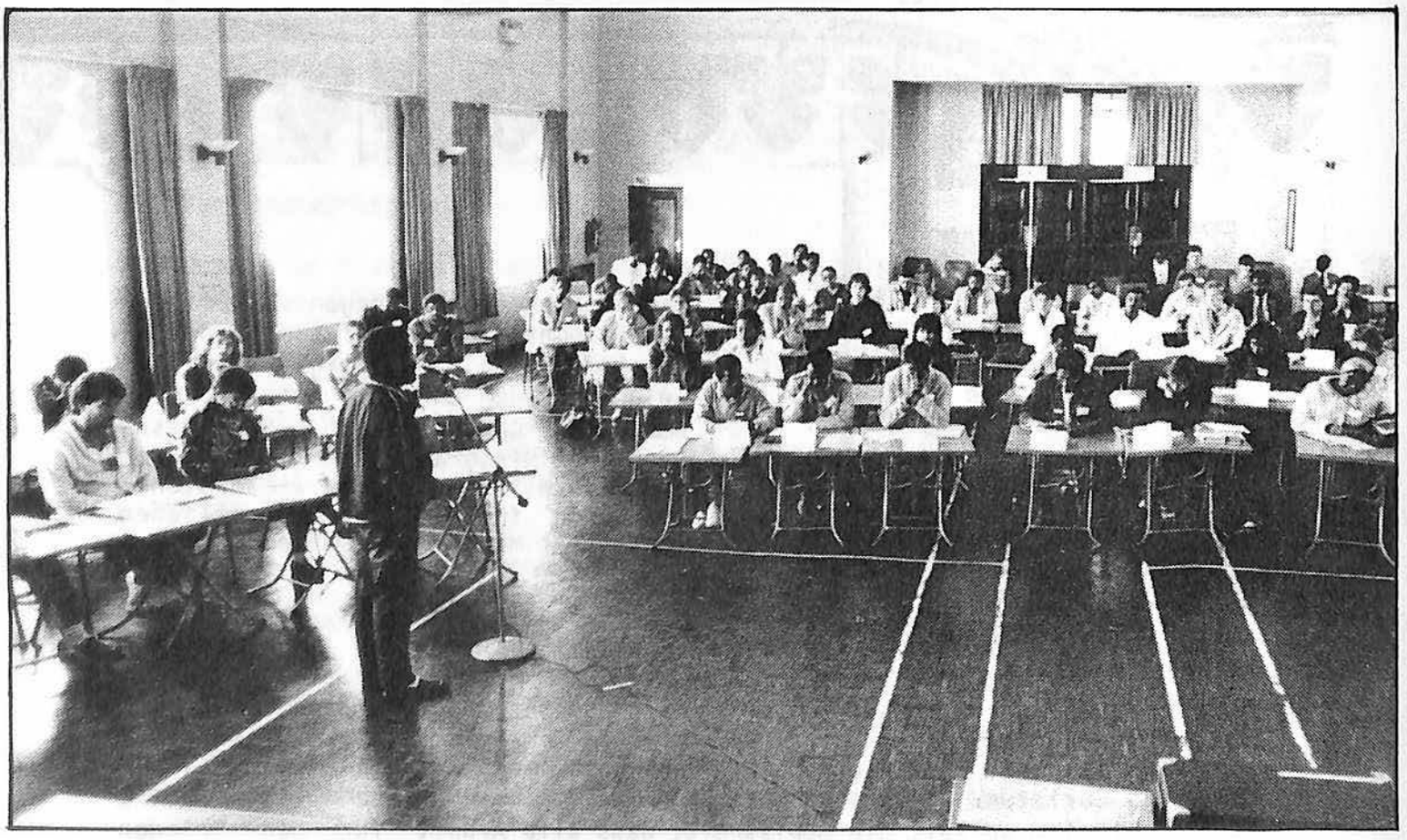
Report by LWF delegate, Ellen Martha Blaasvaer

(Ellen Martha, a former student of theology, member of the Lutheran Church in Norway, worked as a youth intern at the Women's Desk of the LWF from April to July 1986)

A global, ecumenical youth meeting arranged by WCC and SACC took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, July 1-5, 1986. The idea of having such a meeting was conceived during the church leaders' meeting in Harare in December 1985. The intention was to bring together young people from southern Africa and from the rest of the world, particularly from countries which support the regime of South Africa, and to concentrate on the theme "Solidarity in action with the people of South Africa and Namibia."

Together with Judy Diers from the USA, I was sent as a representative of the Lutheran World Federation to this meeting. I carried a letter from the LWF General Secretary, Gunnar Staalsett, which I read to the meeting in plenary.

Delegates from 25 different countries, mainly from South Africa and Namibia, USA and Europe gathered at the youth meeting in Harare. There were also a few delegates from other parts of Africa, from Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America.



WCC Photo: Peter Williams

The idea of the meeting was to let the delegations from South Africa and Namibia control the meeting, i.e. to work out the agenda and profile of it. The South Africans had spent some time together beforehand and seemed to be well prepared and organized when they arrived in Harare. A steering committee with representatives also from the international group took care of the day to day planning.

The framework of the gathering was a dramatic one. The proposed leader of the Namibian delegation, Pastor Kameeta, was denied travel documents and was therefore unable to come. It was obvious that many of the delegates from South Africa and Namibia ran a big risk by going to the meeting. One of the South African delegates, Edwin Arrison, was detained when he was about to enter the plane for Harare at the Ian Smith Airport in Johannesburg. Two others, Michael Coetzee and Donovan Nadison, were detained at the same airport on their way home.

For security reasons, most of the sessions at the meeting were closed for outsiders. In spite of this, one of the South African delegates turned out to be an informer, who was suspected of having been in contact with South African authorities during the whole week.

The first two days of the conference were devoted to information and testimonies from the South African and Namibian delegations. Historical reviews of the struggle for liberation were given and some videos were shown, which focused on the situation of young people in both countries. Some delegates felt that the time spent on information sharing was wasted, since one could assume that most of the people who had come to this meeting would know what is going on inside these two countries. Personally I would say that the information sharing was necessary and useful, since it gave a lively and realistic view of the present situation.

Many of the delegates reported on their personal involvement in the struggle, which included detention, imprisonment and torture. We got a strong impression of how the people's power functions in spite of the regimes efforts to divide and destabilize the people, and how a new, democratic society is developing today through the people's own organizations at grass root level. People are now taking control of their own streets, areas and communities to such an extent that the South Africa of today has become ungovernable.

Attention was paid to the fact that Western media often bring reports of incidents where blacks are fighting blacks. It is unfortunately true that the regime has succeeded to a certain extent in setting up groups against each other, but most of such incidents are initiated by very poor people or criminals, exploited by the police and defense forces. Today the people are very aware of this dividing policy of the regime and are trying to avoid being a victim of their propaganda.

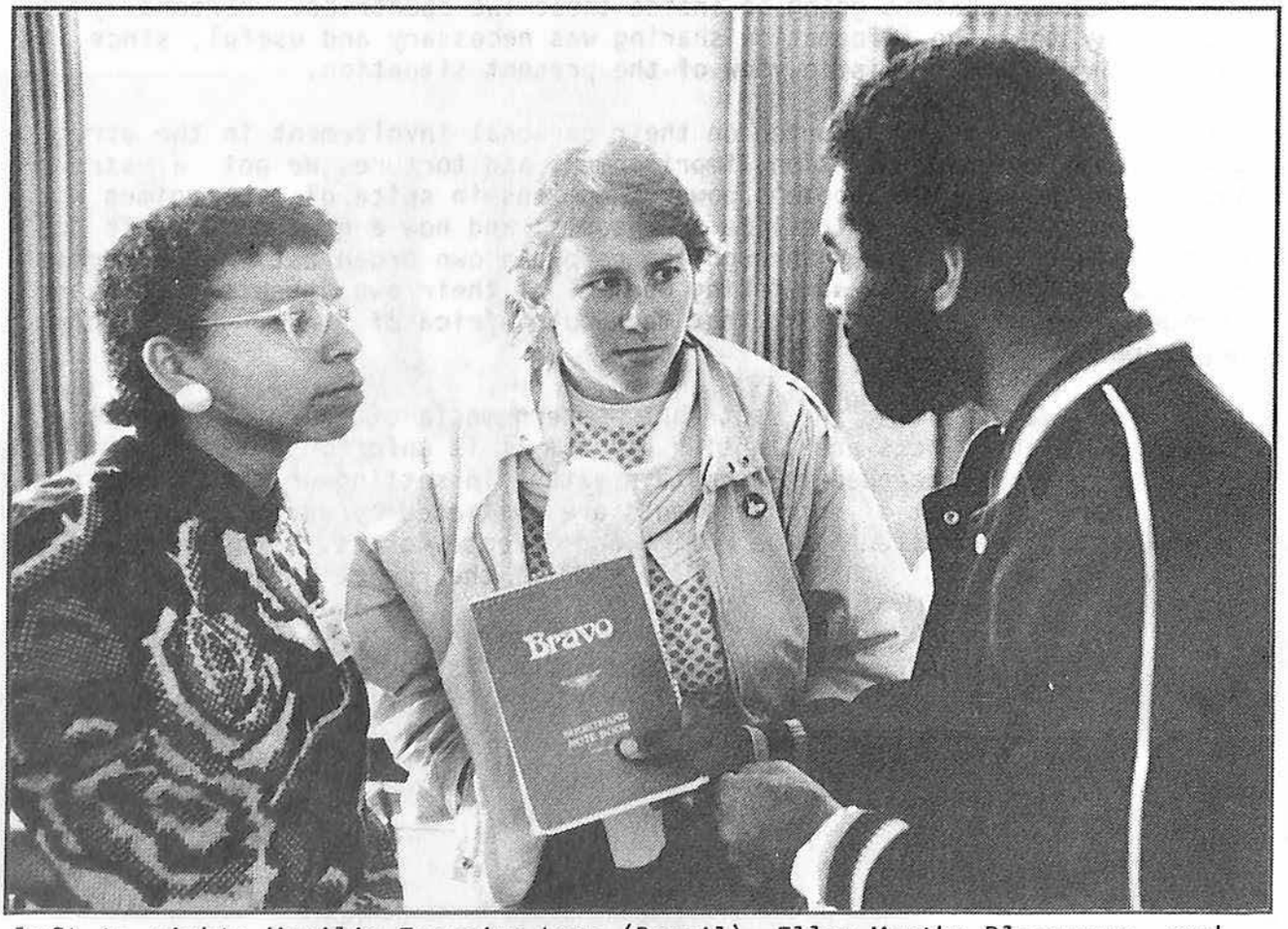
Another issue often reported on in mass media, is the appearance of the homeland leader chief Gatcha Buthelezi and his Enkarta movement, which is

sometimes regarded as a nonviolent black alternative in the South African situation. It was stressed very firmly that this man is an "enemy of the people, nonviolent against the regime, but violent against the people."

We were informed that the attitude of young people towards education seems to be changing. Some time ago, the slogan was "Freedom now - education later", an attitude which was visible in the many school boycotts and student strikes. Today, however, the slogan seems to be "Education for freedom", which means that the students now stress the necessity of having well educated people in their countries when liberation comes. Today they try to influence the curricula and issues that are taught, rather than boycotting the schools.

Strong concern was voiced for the generations growing up in the ongoing crisis situation in southern Africa. There were reports on incidents where children of 10-12 years of age have killed policemen who interfered in rallies and meetings. The question was asked: What has the regime done to these children, to make them like that?

A special input was given on the situation of women in South Africa. Obviously in South Africa women are triple oppressed, being black, poor and female. The crisis situation and especially the widespread separation of families, has made women become leaders in many communities. The delegates from South Africa and Namibia highlighted feminism as an essential aspect of the struggle for liberation, since oppression of women is one of the ways by which the regime tries to control the people and dictates their lives.



From left to right: Marilia Ferreira Leao (Brazil), Ellen Martha Blaasvaer, and Donovan Nadison, South African, arrested upon his return at Johannesburg airport. WCC Photo: Peter Williams

For me, with my Western European background, it was very interesting to listen to and discuss the political analyses of the youth of southern Africa. Some of it was presented in plenary but many of the most interesting discussions took place in smaller groups or in private talks during breaks and especially at nights. On many occasions it was pointed out that the oppression in southern Africa is not so much a question of racism, as of economic exploitation and social injustice. It was stressed that it would never be sufficient to reform this society by removing the apartheid laws. The struggle today is very much a class struggle and only a fundamental change of the whole society can create a just and peaceful situation in southern Africa.

The question of armed struggle was raised at one point of the conference by delegates from the international group. The comment on this from the South African and Namibian youth, was that the question of an armed struggle is a non-issue in southern Africa today. We were reminded of the long history of nonviolent resistance of the people, but faced with the increasing and never-ending violence by the regime the people have realized that armed struggle is one of the necessary reactions. It was emphasized that the international community also is responsible for this development, since western governments have so far been unwilling to exercise sufficient economic pressure on the regime. However, the demand for sanctions is stronger than ever and it was underlined that comprehensive, mandatory sanctions would still be the most efficient weapon against the regime.

Three of the liberation movements in southern Africa, SWAPO, ANC and PAC, were officially represented at the conference. During the last day they were all given time to deliver a message from their respective movements to the meeting.

All through the conference the links between South Africa and the Frontline states were highlighted, and one day was devoted to reports from and discussions on the situation in these states. Delegates from Zambia, Mozambique, Ghana and Lesotho gave inputs, and also shared information from those states that were not represented. It was stressed how dependent the Frontline states are on the regime in South Africa, and how the people are still struggling for independence when it comes to economy and military defense. Unfortunately, this is a struggle against two fronts, since for instance the USA is supporting groups which try to destabilize the peoples' liberation movements in the Frontline states. It was pointed out that one of the most crucial steps towards a break down of the South African regime, is a real independence of the Frontline states, and it was discussed in what way support can be given from the international community.

One day of the meeting was reserved for reports and responses from the international delegates. We heard about the actions and standpoints taken by anti-apartheid movements, churches and governments of Brazil, USA, Caribbean, many European countries and some countries from Asia and Africa. Knowing how little has been done and how much could be done by the international community to put pressure on the regime in South Africa, one can understand that this part of the conference was a depressing one. However, faced with the engagement and spirit of the southern Africans, as well as with their ideas and demands for more effective support, this part of the conference became an opportunity for the international group to renew our commitment to the struggle for a free and independent South Africa and Na-

mibia. The South Africans expressed that it was interesting for them to hear about the activities of the anti-apartheid movements around the world, as well as of the international church bodes, since this sort of information very rarely reaches them.

During the last two days of the conference, we divided into different commissions on certain issues. South African and Namibian delegates were present in all groups and guided the discussions on strategies and recommendations for actions of solidarity. After the group discussions, each commission made a report and their views were discussed in plenary. The question was raised whether the conference should work towards a declaration or another form of document. It was decided that the summary committee, which had been working through the whole meeting, should make a summary of the position of the conference and that the press committee should make a final press release. The conference endorsed the Harare Declaration of the church leaders meeting in December 1985.

Devetta Williams from the U.S.A. was leading prayer during the opening worship.

WCC Photo: Peter Williams

SUMMARIZATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Harare, Zimbabwe, July 6, 1986

Introduction

The following resolutions and strategies together with the attached press release were adopted as the official position statement of the World Council of Churches Youth Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, July 1-5, 1986. The resolutions have been divided into four categories for the sake of clarity.

Conference Positions

A. Support for the victims of Apartheid

1. Financial aid for the victims of apartheid should be channeled through the churches in South Africa and Namibia.

2. Churches and other agencies in the international community should provide education opportunities and scholarship aid for South African and Namibian students.

3. Funds must be provided for education and training for liberation and for first-aid emergency training for detainees and victims of apartheid.

4. Churches in the international community must provide financial support for the south African Council of Churches and the council of Churches in Namibia.

B. Divestment and Sanctions

1. Comprehensive sanctions must be imposed against the illegitimate "government" of South Africa and Namibia.

2. The anti-apartheid movement must engage itself in intensive lobbying of governments, churches, multinational corporations and other parties for the imposition of sanctions.

3. Churches should form lobbying delegations to have a greater impact on their respective governments.

4. All churches must initiate complete divestment of their finances in corporations involved in South Africa and Namibia.

5. We call for the expulsion of Britain from the Commonwealth of Nations if it does not bring complete sanctions against South Africa at the next meeting of the Commonwealth.

6. The international community must engage in economic and consumer boycotts of South African and Namibian products.

7. Campaigns should be initiated now to prevent the "rolling-over" of loans and/or the extension of new credit lines to South African borrowers at the 1987 meeting concerning the South African debt crisis. This campaign should specifically focus on Swiss banks.

8. The Conference calls for strong and firm observance of all UN resolutions regarding South Africa and Namibia.

C. Networking and Follow-up

1. The Program to Combat Racism and the Youth Desk of the World Council of Churches will coordinate the follow-up of this conference.

2. An advisory committee of five representatives from the Conference will aid in the follow-up process in cooperation with the WCC (= Continuation Committee).

3. The delegates from the international community must continue to generate public concern and serve as advocates for individuals detained in South Africa and Namibia.

4. Each country must plan strategies for lobbying and other activities that will result in the end of apartheid.

5. Members of the international community must research their links to the apartheid system and make this information available through the media, the pulpit, and other measures.

6. The Program to Combat Racism should serve as an information center to disseminate information about liberation movements, political prisoners, exiles and other.

7. A meeting of youth activists involved in different struggles around the world should be organized by the Program to Combat Racism, the Youth Desk, and the Conference follow-up Committee.

D. Other Statements

1. The delegates of this Conference state for the record that they reaffirm the legitimacy of the armed struggle presently being waged by the liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia. The Conference delegates urge continued church support of the liberation movements fighting in South Africa and Namibia.

2. The delegates of this Conference commend and express support for the Non-Aligned States' opposition to the South African régime.

3. The delegates of this Conference support the demands of the Harare Declaration (of December 1985) and pledge ourselves to engage in actions of solidarity to end the unjust apartheid régimes in South Africa and Namibia.

* * * * * * * * * *

PRESS RELEASE

(This statement is issued on behalf of all participants, except those from Namibia and South Africa, where freedom to express themselves is restricted by South African Emergency Restrictions.)

Message to the youth of the World:

We, the world youth, have gathered in Harare, Zimbabwe as young people from 25 countries to listen to our brothers and sisters from the strife from South Africa and Namibia. We have felt deep pain and anger and shared their hopes and power.

1. In obedience to God's command we have renewed our commitment to work for the total destruction of apartheid.

2. We share a measure of responsibility for the continuing human atrocities in South Africa and Namibia. We are very angered by the militant dictatorship now wielding fierce power over defenceless people and we resolve to campaign at all levels.

3. Concerning Namibia, we call for the immediate implementation of Resolution 435 of the United Nations.

4. We call for comprehensive mandatory sanctions to be applied against the apartheid regime forthwith and we express our anger with the governments of the United States, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and others for helping build the apartheid state. If comprehensive mandatory sanctions are not applied, they must take responsibility for the inevitable escalation of bloodshed.

5. This consultation wishes to express its clear support for the Non-Aligned Movement summit about to take place in Harare, Zimbabwe. We endorse the positions taken by the Non-Aligned Movement on the isolation of the South African racist regime.

6. As a consultation, we express our total understanding of armed struggle against the illegitimate apartheid regime by the liberation movement and we express our support for all efforts that will bring liberation of the people of Namibia and South Africa.

7. We urge in particular the international youth from the USA, UK, Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland to campaign and pressurize the banks to stop all financial assistance to the South African regime.

8. We are concerned about the plight of South African and Namibian exiles, especially those who live in the Frontline States and we urge Western governments and churches to increase their support to these countries. We pray and support the SACC ministry to refugees.

9. We are concerned about foreign intervention by imperialist countries, especially the USA, in relation to economics, politics and military. This is due to political interests and in order to destabilize the region. We call on these governments to withdraw and to stop destabilizing the people's struggle for liberation in South Africa and Namibia and social transformation in Southern Africa.

10. The apartheid regime has increased repression and thrown a blanket of silence to prevent access to the daily sufferings and victims of repression. We will step up our media dissemination network and we ask PCR of the WCC to coordinate such a scheme with IDAF, NGO's Coordinating Committee and make information available to National Councils of Churches and world media.

11. We are anxious and deeply concerned that the South African delegates attending this consultation face the prospect of immediate arrest. We are ready through our international network to embark on a dynamic protest action in our respective countries in the event of the unlawful detention of any delegate.

12. We strongly abhor the detention of Edwin Arrison at Jan Smuts Airport on 30th June, 1986 as he was about to board the plane to Zimbabwe. We will campaign for an early release.

13. We condemn the denying of traveling documents by the South African regime to Pastor Zephania Kameeta, the Vice-Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia who was supposed to attend this consultation as the leader of the Namibian delegation.

14. We call for the release of all political prisoners, the unbanning of the peoples liberation movements and the return of exiles.

C O N C L U S I O N

We have been deeply inspired by the faith and hope of the Namibian and South African people. We share their pain and joy and joined them in singing freedom songs of their lands.

We were renewed during worship and inspired by the prayers and testimonies of young people from countries represented.

We, therefore, uphold the faith of Christ crucified and share in the redemptive purpose of God in Jesus Christ.

"Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your liberation is drawing near". (Luke 21: Vs. 28).

We uphold the liberation of god in our acts of liberation.

We stand together in our feeling of urgency about South Africa and Namibia and feel compelled by the power of the Holy Spirit to work actively wherever we are, in ways consistent with this communiqué.

And we urge young people throughout the world to move churches and governments to this great task.

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YOUNG PEOPLE INTERESTED IN MISSION GATHERED IN FINLAND

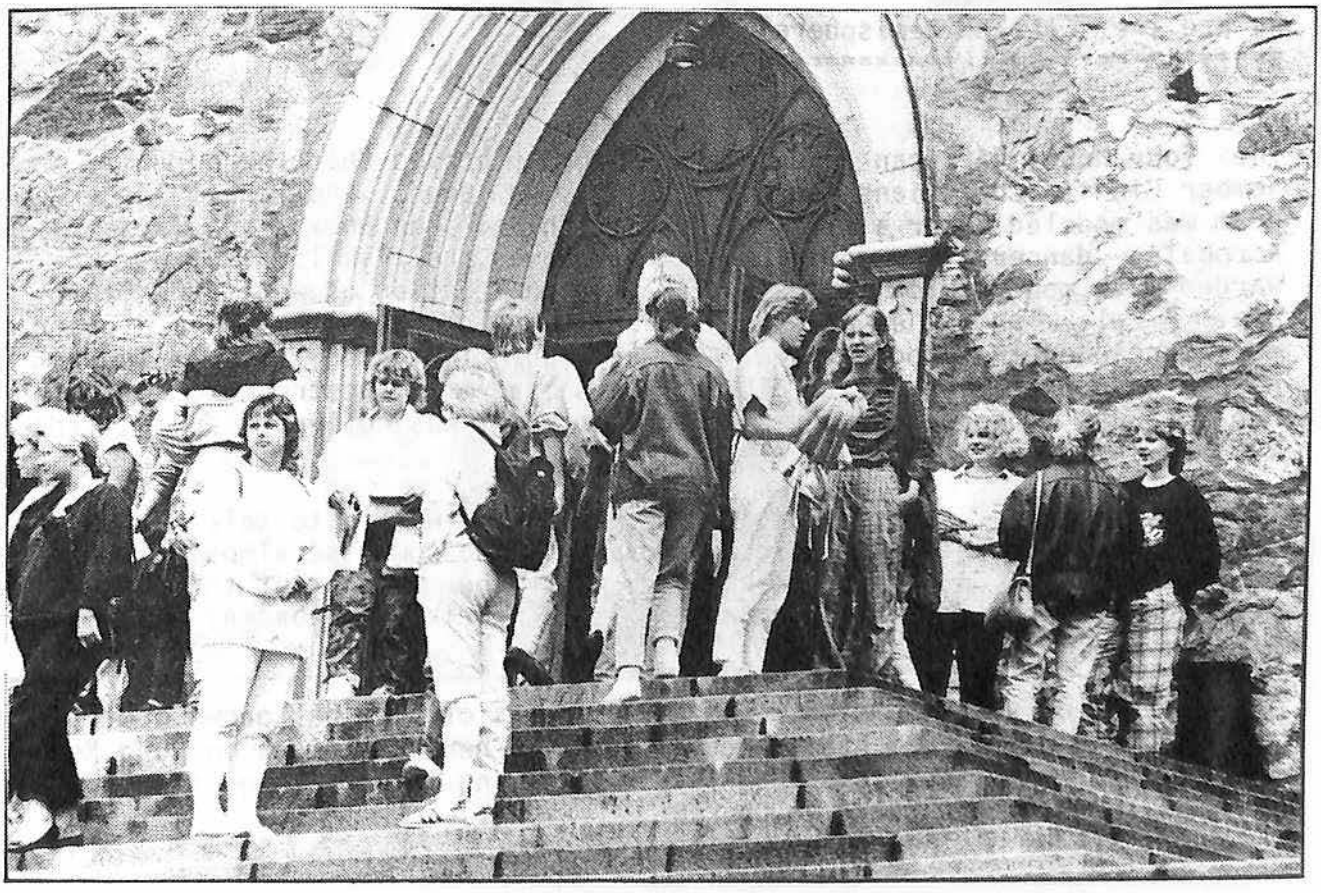
"In this group, permission must be given to ask questions!"
by Mari Teinilä

(Mari Teinilä is a journalist, working with the biggest Finnish Church magazine Kotima)

The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), the largest missionary society of the Church of Finland, and local parishes in Turku organized a youth event concerning mission and commitment. The event (held in Turku August 8-10) proved that Finnish young people have a concern for the "Littler hemisphere", the children and youth which comprise almost a half of the world's population.

Almost ninety percent of Finland's population belongs to the Lutheran church. Its active young members come together in many annual events held on summer weekends by various organizations in the church. Normally, FELM holds its own youth event alongside its annual conference in June, but this year, for the first time ever, they were held separately. About one thousand participants aged 15-25 attended the youth event. Many came from abroad.

The devotional aspect of Christianity was shown in midnight communions, early morning services and a Sunday worship service with the cathedral congregation.



IN FRONT OF THE CATHEDRAL OF TURKU

On the more practical side, seminars dealt with questions concerning Latin America, Africa, missions, evangelization in Europe, and the future in general. Dr. Choong Chee Pang from singapore spoke in theme festivals: "Scandinavia must be re-evangelized," and "Christianity has a chance to become a dominant influence in the world! I want to share this vision with you."

Tapio Leskinen, a Finnish pastor who has worked in Latin America, brought out a different aspect in his seminar. "The poor tell us what the world is really like. If we don't listen to them, we will certainly go in a wrong direction", he said.

In a seminar named "Youth and Mission", mission was understood as evangelization: outreach both abroad and at home. Why do mission groups in Finnish congregations usually consist of elderly members only? What more should my church be doing for mission? How can I be involved? How am I to be a good, witnessing Christian in my own surroundings? What about witnessing through the mass media? Questions such as these stirred active discussion. For example, some participants wondered whether Christians could break the ice by actively trying to reach the lonely in Finnish cities, where people seldom know their neighbors. Could this also become a channel of witnessing?

The many speakers in Turku emphasized different things. This created a colorful whole, which left participating youths with good questions rather than ready answers.

We are the "Littler hemisphere"

The four-hour "African evening" on Saturday proved that the normally so somber Finnish Christians can also laugh...and laugh...and laugh! The program was modeled after a similar event which had been held in Tanzania. Acrobats, dancers, and gospel musicians showed their skills, and were rewarded with money which was handed on for construction of wells in Ethiopia. A play which ended with Finnish youths drinking from an Ethiopian well concluded the program. The "African evening" started a campaign of gospel concerts, by which FELM collects money for constructing wells in Ethiopia and Senegal. Enough money for two wells was collected during the evening in Turku.

"There are many ways to divide the globe. One way is to talk about the 'Littler hemisphere', the children and youths who comprise almost a half of the world's population. Whoever wins the support of this Littler hemisphere, wins tomorrow for himself," said Henrik Smedjebacka, director of FELM.

The amount of youth work on the mission fields of FELM has grown continually. For example, FELM has worked among young heroin addicts in Hong Kong for almost two decades, and FELM is participating in starting the youth work of the Botswana Lutheran Church.

"In this group we are brothers and sisters. No one is better than any other. In this group, there must be permission to ask questions and to doubt. No one is to be left alone in this group," said Rev. Pertti Poutanen, the chief of the FELM youth department in his sermon in the Turku cathedral on Sunday.

The theme of the Turku event, "Mystery in fellowship", became obvious when prayer was conducted in eight languages, or when Magdalena Shamena, who has lived in exile for twelve years, heard songs of her home church in Namibia sung in her own language by a Finnish choir.

bli kamrat med södra Afrika

MEETING SWAZILAND

a cooperation and exchange program between the Lutheran Churches of Sweden and Swaziland

"Meeting Swaziland" was initiated by the Church of Sweden Youth following a similar successful project with Zimbabwe in 1982/83 and is part of a wider program of Sweden which, among other things, wants to:

- Establish a new kind of relationship within the worldwide church not restricted to experts but experienced between ordinary human beings, between disciples, all united in Christ.

- Work with two-way missions enable the Church of Sweden to benefit from the rich vitality of its sister churches in Africa.

- Develop activities which promote world peace.

- Create channels for a deeper involvement in international questions for the youth within the church so that they become aware of their role in the world.

"Meeting Swaziland" is run as a 'folk high school' course alternating between studies (in Sweden) and practical work serving various communities (in Swaziland). The group live as a part of the community learning their way of life.

When the young Swedes return home they will be expected to accept the responsibility for the knowledge they have gained in Swaziland by transferring it to others by means of discussions, books, pamphlets, photographs etc. Most of the group are committed to spending at least five months giving talks and lectures about their experiences.

"Meeting Swaziland" will be followed by "Meeting Sweden" when the nine Swazi participants go to Sweden next year for seven months to continue the exchange process by learning by experience about the country. In Sweden "Meeting Swaziland" is organized by a planning committee whose members come from the 'folk high school', the Church of Sweden Mission, Church of Sweden Aid and two church youth organizations.

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I have learnt to share ideas with others, to take a close look at my own country and focus on its basic needs, says President Shongwe, 25, from Swaziland. President is one of the 32 participants in "Meeting Swaziland" - a cooperation and exchange program between the Lutheran Churches of Sweden and Swaziland. In April 1986 23 young people arrived from Sweden to join 9 young Swazis to begin the project. For six months they live, work, worship and study side by side as they tackle a variety of tasks and explore each others culture. In January 1987 the 9 Swazis will go to Sweden to take part in the work of church congregations there.

We should know not only our own country but also foreign lands by sharing daily life and learning the customs. Youth has a responsibility to the community, to identify its needs like a clear water supply, construction of toilets etc., says President.

Four groups of two Swazis and four to six Swedes have joined different congregations in Swaziland doing community work such as mending water-tanks, working with pre-schools and putting up tents with the refugees at Ndzevane settlement. The work is led by Swazi leaders from the Church and the Lutheran World Service.

The longer we stay at the refugee settlement the more we realize that there is so much from the past we can't share with the refugees, being forced to leave home and friends, experiencing war and suffering under South Africa's homeland policy. Now there is anxiety about the cotton harvest and worry that the wretched cotton will never make them self-sufficient, that they will always be depending on the distribution of food rations. But still we, with our calm secure existence, are able to work with them side by side in the fields - and understand each other a little bit more, says Karin Albertsson, 21, one of the Swedish participants. To learn more about Swaziland the group have study projects with subjects such as: history, traditions, ways of life, christianity and church, youth, trade and agriculture.

In between the work and study periods the whole group met for reunions. They also attended a weekend youth rally and spent two weeks together at a work camp with the Mbekelweni community making foundations for a school building.

When the Swedish group goes back to Sweden they will bring a lot of experiences back home. For three months they will stay together and work out information material. They will also share their experiences with people in parishes and schools etc., round the country as they give lectures and talks. Around 700 parishes, youth and children's groups and individuals in Sweden follow the project as subscribers of regular reports written by the group.

"WE WILL BE THE ONES LIVING AND GROWING INTO A NEW LUTHERAN CHURCH"

by David D. Grafton,
National Board of Luther League

January 1st, 1988 marks an historical date in the lives of many Lutherans in the United States as the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America unite into one body, a New Lutheran Church. The formation and structure of the proposed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be the result of years of work accomplished by committees, boards, and task forces each introducing and compromising on many different ideas, procedures, and hierarchical divisions of the new church. The time leading up to the actual formation of this church is a time of uncertainty and anticipation. As part of the Church, the youth also are greatly affected by the tensions and concerns raised within this unification process.

In a very complicated and businesslike procedure, it becomes extremely difficult for youth to become involved in a merger of three churches. Pension plans, salaries, restructuring, and all such essential policy-making can become confusing to understand and comprehend. In an adult world, youth are often left to wait until the smoke clears from the conference table before they begin to decipher the results. In this formation period the future for the youth in the New Church becomes questionable.

As youth, where will we stand in the New Church? Growing into an adult world, we will have to deal with the results of the merger. We will be the ones living and growing into a New Lutheran Church. It is for this reason that youth involvement and input is and has been essential in the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Throughout the merger process great care has been given to youth ministry and youth involvement in the Church. One of the first actions taken during the early formation process was the approval of the first national youth gathering of the ELCA. This approval was not only an important move in the direction of youth ministry but it was an action enhancing the role of youth ministry in the future. Various ALC, AELC, and LCA officials have expressed their concern for the need for youth ministry and involvement to continue in the New Church. Their concern has been met with great appraisal from youth who are willing to become involved and wish to make a difference in the church.

The 1988 National Youth Gathering of the ELCA will be one of the first major events of the newly formed church, and will set the stage for the emergence of youth involvement within the church. In its goals, the Gathering Committee has expressed its desire to "provide opportunities to encourage youth to seek leadership roles in the larger context of their home congregations...", to "provide opportunities to earn more innovative approaches to youth ministry...", to "equip and challenge participants for the ongoing expression of faith..." and to "provide opportunity... to dialogue with leaders and unit representatives of the ELCA."

This first National Youth Gathering of the ELCA will announce the celebration of youth in a New Church, and will demonstrate their eagerness to become involved. In the years of preparation for the ELCA, youth from the three churches have already engaged in joint activities (conventions, outings, fundraisers, etc.) to strengthen the coming unification. The youth have shown that they recognize the need to become one body, and are ready for the New Church.

All in all, youth ministry in the New Church is entering a positive era. Good feelings are present. The merger process is doing well in its efforts to provide for the youth and the stage is set for youth ministry and involvement in the ELCA. Currently youth are being sought out for input on boards and committees on the congregational, district, and national levels. Youth involvement and encouragement has been strong and energetic in the merger process and will continue to grow stronger within the New Church.

As youth participation in the Church has been encouraged and is growing, the prospects for youth involvement in the ELCA look promising. Yet, only time will tell the extent to which youth may become actively involved in their home congregations and the ELCA as a whole.

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"THE FIVE STAR PROGRAM"

by Wolfgang Boehner

Wolfgang Boehner is a young German youth worker who has gone to Papua New Guinea to help with the youth work for a one year period. In this article, taken from his letter to the Youth Desk, he is giving us some information on "The Five Star Program", descriptive of the youth work in PNG.

1. Services:

In consideration of the Malayan context, we think that it is very important for the youth work not to be separated from the congregation, but to work out solutions for a good cooperation particularly in the area of services. In addition, we want to encounter each other as brothers and sisters under God's word. In many places it is especially the youth who bring new life into the often idle congregations.

2. Bible studies and other studies:

In the Bible studies we want to respond to the manifold questions of the young people concerning the new situation of today. I have often been astonished by the eagerness of the youth to work on biblical texts. Other studies should respond to theological questions or support should be given to certain sections. Sometimes we also have courses on native agricultural questions or we have the basic concepts of accounting explained to us. For certain Projects some basic knowledge is required, which is also taken up under this point.

3. Mission work:

Right from the beginning there was a deliberate missionary youth work here, because of the fact that there still were too few church coworkers. The youth then go to other villages to help build up a youth group there, or they help the pastors at the services. In the religious education in schools there are also often young people who help out with whatever qualifications they have (sometimes there are also courses to this effect) The main missionary task, however, remains in the own village, in the own family (which is no always easy).

4. Practical assistance:

Under this heading we find agricultural projects which are partly supported by the government. However, in the first place the objective of this program activity is to help the villages. E.g. help old people, or to restore the church. Sometimes there are also repairs to be done on a bridge or a street. Of course, the young group can also help some businessman (Plantation) and thereby earn some money for the group. This should, however, not end up in making big business as this could easily cause disputes and sometimes even dissolve the group.

5. Sports and games:

In this area also the youth work can extend its activities. In many places a sports weekend is organized, often also in connection with Bible studies and services.

This is a short description of our youth work program, where the points mentioned are more of a structure, a skeleton, and the whole must be filled with work on the spot e.g. with flesh and life.

Next year we will have our annual regional Youth Conference where we count on the participation of 100 delegates. Deliberately we want to put this community under God's word and not only deal with it as points of the agenda.

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"EHRE SEI GOTT UND AUF ERDEN FRIEDEN"

Vollversammlung der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen tagte in Schottland

von Udo Hahn

Stirling/Schottland - Mit wenig greifbaren Ergebnissen für junge Menschen ging die 7. Vollversammlung der 118 Mitgliedskirchen umfassenden Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen (KEK), die vom 4. bis 11. September in der schottischen Universitätsstadt Stirling unter dem Motto "Ehre sei Gott und auf Erden Friden" stand, zu Ende. Ueber 450 Teilnehmer, darunter auch ein kleines Häuflein "jüngerer Delegierter", aus orthodoxen, lutherischen und anglikanischen Kirchen aus 26 Ländern Europas mit Ausnahme Albaniens, waren zusammengekommen, um miteinander Gottesdienst zu feiern und sich über die aktuelle Lage Europas auszutauschen. Zudem präsentierte sich die 1959 im dänischen Nyborg gegründete Orgnisation nichtkatholischer Kirchen ganz im Zeichen des Wandels, da 85 Prozent der Delegierten erstmals an einer solchen Konferenz teilnahmen. Einen Wechsel gab es auch im Amt des Generalsekretärs. Nach 30 Jahren aktiver Arbeit für die KEK, davon 18 Jahre als Generalsekretär der im Genfer ökumenischen Zentrum ansässigen Zentrale, stand der britische Baptist Glenn Garfield Williams nicht mehr für eine weitere Kandidatur zur Verfügung. Zum Nachfolger wurde bereits vor Beginn der Vollversammlung der schweizer Reformierte Jean Fischer bestimmt, der zuletzt beim zwischenkirchlichen Hilfswerk in Lausanne tätig war.

Wenig ermutigend verlief ein Jugendvortreffen vom 29. bis 31. August in Dunblane, das mehr als Vorbereitungswochenende für die Stewards bezeichnet werden muss. Da lediglich fünf "jüngere Delegierte" anwesend sein konnten, hielt sich die Vorbereitung auf die Vollversammlung in bescheidenem Rahmen, wenngleich der neue Generalsekretär mir seiner Frau sowie Hans Schmocker als Sekretär für Finanzen und den zwischenkirchlichen Dienst Rede und Antwort standen. Dementsprechend schwierig war es dann auch, die übrigen 20 delegierten, die jünger als 30 Jahre waren, wenigstens während der Vollversammlung immer wieder zu einem Treffen zusammenzuholen, um Erlebnisse, Eindrücke und Informationen auszutauschen. In einer dem Plenum vorgelegten offenen Erklärung haben die "jüngeren Delegierten" darauf hingewiesen, dass es für die zukünftige Arbeit der KEK unbedingt nötig sei, auch Jugendliche und natürlich Frauen einzubeziehen. Schliesslich gelang es dann durchzusetzen, dass im 27köpfigen Beratenden Ausschuss eine Frau, die jünger als 30 Jahre alt ist, vertreten sein wird.

Im Blick auf die Zukunft sollte die KEK versuchen, so die Jugendlicher, jüngerer Menschen besser in die Arbeit zu integrieren sowie auf die Mitgliedskirchen einwirken, dass in den Delegationen, wenn möglich, bestimmte Plätze reserviert werden.

Unter den Beschlüssen der Vollversammlung ragte jener hervor, in dem sich die KEK verpflichtet, noch vor 1988 eine Konferenz der Kirchen im Bereich der KSZE-Unterzeichnerstaaten über Frieden und Gerechtigkeit durchzuführen. Aufgenommen wurde damit in besonderer Weise die Idee des Philosophen und Atomphysikers Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, der 1985 vor dem deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentag in DUsseldorf die Einberufung eines weltweiten "Konzils des Friedens" gefordert hatte. Die Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen sieht dieses Treffen, das ein "unüberhörbares Wort" zum Frieden sprechen soll, als Teil des vom Oekumenischen Rat der Kirchen initiierten konziliaren Prozesses, der im Jahre 1990 in eine Konferenz über "Frieden, Gerechtigkeit und Bewahrung der Schöpfung" einmünden soll.

Besonders nachdenkenswert scheinen einige Ausführungen des ebenfalls scheidenden Präsidiumsvorsitzenden, Kirchenpräsident André Appel (Strassbourg) zu sein. Er hatte vor allem das mangelnde Profil der KEK beklagt und ihr attestiert, dass es "nur wenig echtes ökumenisches Miteinander" unter den Gliedkirchen gebe. Zudem dringe man nicht mehr bis zur Basis durch und es stehe in der Gefahr, "im Gewirr der internationalen ökumenischen Konferenzen zu ersticken." Einen positiven Ausweg sieht der elsässiche Kirchenmann nur darin, dass man versuchen müsse, "die Quellen und Wurzeln des Glaubens wiederzufinden, selbst wenn dies zu neuen Formen der Armut und des Machtverlusts der Kirche" führe.

Als "Instrument der Versöhnung zwischen Ost und West" hatte Glenn Garfield Williams die KEK gewürdigt und darauf verwiesen, dass noch viele Brücken zwischen den Kirchen zu bauen sind, sowie bereits bestehende gewartet, repariert und verstärkt werden müssen.

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NEWS IN BRIEF - from the life of the youth in the world

CZECHOSLOVAKIA (from Syndesmos News, July 1986)

International Orthodox Youth Meeting held in Czechoslovakia

Adventure, stimulating discussion and overwhelming hospitality were the three keynotes of the SYNDESMOS Camp Agape V hosted June 31 - July 6, by the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Presov. Twenty-four Orthodox young people from Great Britain, France, Poland, Ethiopia, the United States, West Germany, the Soviet Union, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia participated in the week-long seminar, the first international Orthodox youth meeting ever held in Czechoslovakia, under the theme "The Church; A Eucharistic Community".

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (epd)

Evangelical Youth Service has planned to organize six journeys to Eastern Europe

Berlin/Göttingen (epd). The Evangelical Youth Service has planned to organize in the framework of East/West contacts six study tours to Eastern Europe, between July and October of this year. The countries to be visited were Poland, Romania, the CSSR and the Soviet Union. The aim of these trips was to obtain information on the situation of the church in these countries. The program included discussions with representatives of the Russian-Orthodox church and visits to the Catholic Church in Poland as well as to the communities of the "Siebenbürger Sachsen" in Romania.

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (epd)

Evangelical commissioner for sectarian issues warns against youth religions

Kiel (epd). Pastor Friedrich W. Haack (Munich), commissioner for sectarian and ideological issues of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, has warned against the steady growth of psycho-cultures, Guru movements and socalled youth religions in the FRG. Gurus, psycho-cultures and youth religions in the FRG abuse of the basic constitutional right of freedom for the choice of ones religion.

As youth religions Haack mentioned among others the Mun-sect, the Transcendental Meditation (TM) and the Scientology Church. These movements are often based on an authoritarian structure with an "infallible leader" who demands unconditional obedience. In addition, youth religions often claim

News in Brief contd.

to be the only ones to have a "safe recipe" and that solely their members would survive the "coming end of the world". The mun-sect would even welcome a Third World War as being necessary to eradicate communism as "The Evil" to free the way for the "democracy of the hearts" under the leadership of the Corean San Myung Mun.

Haack requested the government and churches to work out a clear-cut definition as to the meaning of "freedom of religion". However, the basic constitutional law should, in spite of the abuse of certain groups. not suffer any limitation.

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FINLAND (from report by Matti Peiponen)

Church Youth Festival in Jyväskylä May 16-18, 1986

Dreams are possible
Dreams are dangerous
Dreams can become reality

The Church Youth Festival is an annual youth gathering with more than six thousand young Finns. The festival is organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in cooperation with various Christian youth organizations and with the local congregation and town. This year the theme was "Dreams... if only one could see!" It is the first time the festival has had such an international theme with foreign guests and programs dealing with the difficult situations in South Africa and Namibia.

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GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (epd)

Evangelical Youth called upon to support a "federal resolution"

Potsdam (epd). The regional youth constituency of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg has called upon the approximately 4.000 participants of this years "national youth Sundays" to support a "federal resolution" in favor of peace, justice and preservation of the Creation. These Evangelical youth meetings take place regularly, since four decades, in Templin, Burg/Spreewald and Potsdam-Hermannswerder. Also this year the Potsdam meeting on June 8 was able to welcome some 2.000 young people, and, according to the organizers, the preceding youth days in Templin and in Burg were also attended by about 2.000 participants. The "federal resolution" says that "it should not be admitted that the scission of our world be deepened and that in the name of religions and ideologies prejudices and walls are being built up".

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News in Brief contd.

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (epd)

"Allianz" Annual Conference with 5.000 participants, mainly youth

Bad Blankenburg (epd). Some 5.000 people, mainly youth, attended the annual conference of the Evangelical "Allianz" in Bad Blankenburg (District of Gera). The theme of the traditional meeting which lasted 5 days and closed on August 24, was "... so that the world may believe".

This conference, which has issued from last century's awareness movement, was mainly centred on evangelization and meditation, in addition to worship and Bible studies. Also discussed during this year's meeting was the gap between poor and rich people in the world as well as the demand for adopting a more simple style of life.

Criticism was heard concerning the way people orient themselves on efficiency and property, regarding alcohol and drug abuse as well as the practice of abortion legalized in the GDR.

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GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (kipa)

Roger Schutz for the first time in Eastern Berlin

Berlin, October 20 (kipa). In the framework of the "pilgrim's path of reconciliation", Roger Schutz, Prior of the Ecumenical Community of Taizé, (South of France) for the first time spent a weekend in Berlin. Schutz, who had visited the GDR four times since 1980 and who proceeded to Warsaw on Sunday, celebrated ecumenical prayer worships on Saturday in two East Berlin churches. Supported by Cardinal Joachim Meisner, Catholic bishop of Berlin, and Bishop Gottfried Frock of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, the services were attended by more than 5.000 Christians of both confessions, mainly young people.

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HUNGARY (from UKP, August 15, 1986)

Ecumenical Youth Conference in Balatonszarszo

30 reformed, Evangelical Lutheran, Baptist, Orthodox and Methodist young people gathered between June 9 and 11 in the holiday residence of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Balatonszarszo for their first ecumenical youth conference. This ecumenical conference took place upon the suggestion of

- the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary/OERKU
- the Interecclesiastic Committee for Peace /ZKFK
- the Circle of Friends of the Christian Peace Conference/CPC
- the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe/EYCE

News in Brief contd.

Members of the community, theologians and young pastors participated in the discussions. Two Bible studies were read to the Conference:

- "Peace as a present" / John 14:27 and
- "Peace as a task" / Matth. 5:9.

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INDONESIA (from ALPS Quarterly)

Modern and traditional sports features of Indonesian Youth Gathering

SIBORONGBORONG, North Sumatra, Indonesia (alps) -- Modern sports and traditional Batak games combined have been featured at a five-day Lutheran youth event at the new Sports Hall of the Jetun Youth Center, 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) east of here recently.

Some 1,220 participants, including church officials from 13 districts of HKBP's 16 districts, attended the opening ceremony. Earlier in the day a three-day trumpet festival, which was joined by 63 trumpeters, closed. Both events were part of HKBP's activities in anticipation of its 125th anniversary.

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INDONESIA (from ALPS Quarterly, Nov. 1986)

PEARAJA TARUTUNG, Indonesia (alps) -- Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP) ordained the first woman, Noortje P.L.R. Lambantoruan, as pastor on Sunday, July 27.

She was the first woman pastor in HKBP's 125-year history. In 1982 HKBP constituted that a woman who has completed her theological studies as well as her vicarage could be ordained as a pastor.

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PHILIPPINES (from ALPS Quarterly, Nov. 1986)

MANILA (alps) -- This year's Asia Youth Week (Oct. 13-19) had the theme, "To build and plant the new Asian church."

During this week the Asian church youth were encouraged to interpret the Bible in the Asian context, make faith relevant through action, establish solidarity linkages and build a strong Asian ecumenical youth movement.

The Asia Youth Week Office of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and the Christian Conference of Asia Youth provided resources for discussions such as Asia Week posters, post cards, calendars, slide and tape presentations and worship materials.

News in Brief contd.

SOUTH AFRICA (from recent issue of ELCSA Youth Magazine "STIEBEUEL No. 2)

"ASSISTANCE TO THE NATION"

Many people are looking for an ear
that will listen
They have it, but they are afraid.
They do not find it among Christians
Because Christians are talking when they should be
listening
He who no longer listen to his brother or his sister
will soon no longer listen to God either.

My brothers and my sisters
What are your intentions?
Why can't you listen to each other?
The churches are empty
The schools are empty
Why?
Where are you?
What about Makroramo?
They are full to its capacity.
The churches are failing to use its theological
resources to respond to the challenges of the day -
challenges of the society that is confronted with
many serious political problems.

Such as polarisation between Black and white
in terms of sharing a common political vision.
All this suggests that there is a crisis of leadership
in the church.
There is also a spiritual crisis in many of our churches
a lack of deep spiritual commitment to the power
of liberating Gospel.

The church must express its Ministry
and its Gospel in service
people depend on the church to express
the ongoing presence of the King-Dom of God.
I would like to inform you that
to attend the church
to listen to each other
to respect, and to unite
is the will of God.
Take an active part and attend the meetings.

TSHEPO MPHIRIME
PHAHAMENG YOUTH
MANGAUNG.

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News in Brief contd.

SWITZERLAND

Geneva Informal Meeting (GIM): "Family Life Education" June 10, 1986

As a follow-up to the International Youth Year, GIM has included in its line-up of activities a workshop on family life education. The workshop was organized by the NGO Working Group on Family Life Education with members comprising major international non-governmental youth organizations. The Working Group was organized in 1983 with the principal aim of promoting family life education as an integral part of programs involving young people and facilitating inter-agency cooperation in this field.

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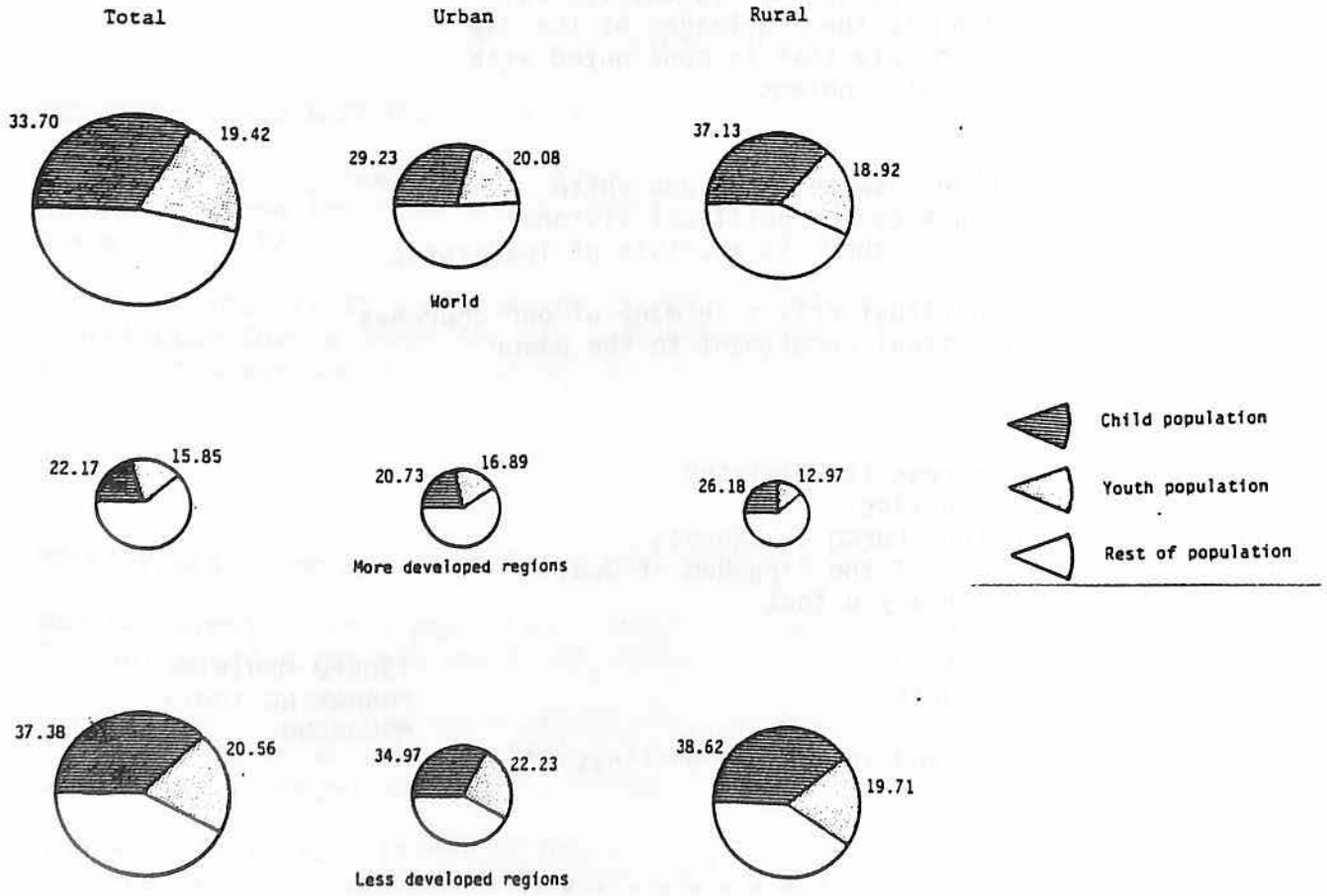
UNITED NATIONS (from a Population Newsletter)

The majority of the world's population: children and youth

In 1985, the number of children (persons under 15 years of age) in the world is estimated to be 1.6 billion, or 34 per cent of the world's population; the number of youth (persons aged between 15 and 24) is estimated to be 940 million, or 19 per cent of the world's total population.



News in Brief contd.

USA (from news of the ALC, June 18)

Minneapolis--San Antonio will be the site of the gathering planned for Lutheran youth in 1988, based on a decision made by the Gathering Committee at its meeting here June 11-14. Dates for the event will be July 31-August 4, 1988. The committee is made up of youth and adult representatives of the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). The three church bodies are in the process of forming a new Lutheran church, set to begin in January 1988.

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USA (from LWI 32/86)

Missouri Synod Youth Gathering opens on social action theme

Washington, August 19 (rns)--More than 12.000 young Lutherans were urged to become involved in the fights against world hunger, abortion and racism during an upbeat nighttime gathering August 4 at the Washington Monument. They came to the nation's capital for a five-day youth convention of the growing conservative evangelical 2.7 million-member Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

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USA (from a letter to the youth desk)

Children of War tour is a highly successful youth empowerment program which is building an international solidarity and peace network of teenagers from areas of war and oppression and from the United States. It utilizes the vision and courage of young people victimized by war and oppression to communicate and promote public activism around the issues of peace and justice.

The 1984 Children of War tour brought together 40 youths (ages 14-17) from the U.S., Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Vietnam, the Marshall Islands, Israel, Cambodia, and West Germany. Two U.S. participants traveled with each group, one from the disarmament and one from an ethnic minority community. The young people reached 25,000 teenagers as well as thousands of adults in 235 schools, congregations, and community centers in 54 cities. The tour reached millions more through the unprecedented media coverage, which began with a front-page story in **The New York Times**, followed by 135 articles, and television coverage on major in-depth talk shows and news. Figures such as Bishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Allan Boesak (whose daughter Lieneke was a tour participant) have been actively involved in this program with us. Currently entertainer Harry Belafonte has become a key promoter and fundraiser, and UNICEF has become actively involved as well. Our 1986 activities include another Children of War tour in November to 27 U.S. cities, and an international youth organizing conference cosponsored by UNICEF in early December.

News in Brief contd.

YUGOSLAVIA (kipa)

Youth Festival in Slovenia

Ljubljana, September 23 (kipa). More than 4.000 young people from Slovenia (Yugoslavia), the neighboring Carinthia and the nearby Julisch-Venetien gathered over the weekend in Stiena for an ecclesiastical youth meeting. "Christian hope" was the theme of the Festival which took place in the Cisternian convent of Stiena, near Ljubljana.

Archbishop Alois Sustar, formerly assistant bishop in Coire, was responsible for the festival worship which was celebrated jointly by five bishops and 150 priests.

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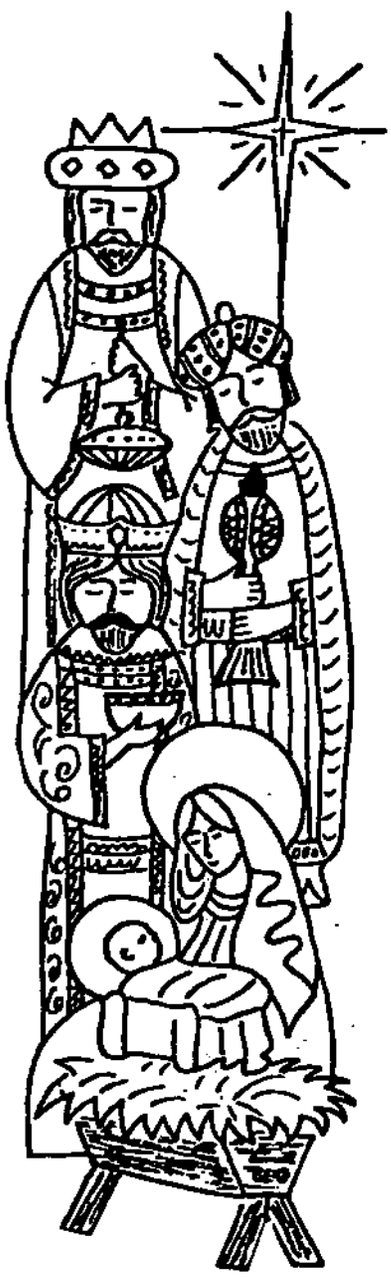
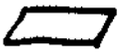


All this took place
to fulfill what the
Lord had said through
the Prophet:
"The virgin will
be with child
and will give birth
to a son, and they
will call him
Immanuel"
which means,
"God with us."

Matthew 1:22-23

Youth Newsletter Address Update

NAME.....

 1. I have a CHANGE OF ADDRESS. My new address is:

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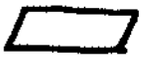
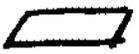
.....(Please write legible)

 2. Please DISCONTINUE sending the Youth Newsletter to me

 3. Please ADD THESE PEOPLE to your mailing list.
(Use other sheets if necessary)

Name.....

Address.....

Name.....

Address.....

Please return to: LWF Youth Desk, P.O. Box 55, Route de Ferney 150,
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland